

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No.78 and

what a grand month it has been. Liverpool have celebrated their 10th Anniversary with a bang. Crewe had a bumper show once again, with a house full of eager fans and a programme full of varied entertainers. And North Wales held a special party night with over 120 in attendance. So Read On . . .

Greg Croft—Just heard from Kevin Bridgewater that poor old Greg Croft has died. Greg is one of the members of the GFS who helped to run the London Branch. He was a very keen member. Some of you will remember Greg as the GFS member who won the 1996 Stanley King Song-writing Competition with 'Mr Wu Has Got A Disco Now'.



I don't know any other details yet.

Liverpool's 10th Anniversary by Tom Bailey

Hello Stan, Your fears that we would not have a good attendance for our 10th Anniversary proved to be groundless. In the words of the song, "Oh What A Night It Was " it really was!! We had a lovely surprise when Cyril and Sheila Palmer paid us a visit. Stan Watkinson did a stalwart job as MC in your absence, - good enough to make a take over bid for the position.. Stan attempted to start the proceedings off with a thrash but the only players we could get up were young Ben Hallewell and young Greg Simister. Needless to say, as always they gave an excellent performance. We had a welcome return for Jim Bramwell who did his usual acts with his jokes, followed by another first class spot from Cyril Palmer.

We were really proud of the two youngsters Ben & Greg, who put the older members to shame. Mike Turner was his usual professional self and surprise, surprise we had a visit from our prodigal son, Jed Gennet, and as usual Jed serenaded us. Stan W. managed to persuade Wilf Murray, Howie Read, George Morgan and Bob Muirhead to get up and do a spot. After their spot George did a performance on his own with his genuine Hawaiian ukulele.

Now what more can be said about John Shreeve that hasn't already been said? His playing—with his spider leg fingers—certainly impressed , not only our members, but some of the Conservative Club members who play in professional groups. As you are aware, we had a catering firm to supply the buffet, and what a wonderful spread they laid on. We ordered enough for 35 but they supplied enough for 5,000. We'll certainly contact them again next time. Good beer, good cheer, good music and an excellent night all round. We are sorry that you couldn't be with us. Tom.

The Star of the Month Ashley Caldicott



Ashley outshone us all at the Crewe meeting. He had three spots on stage and beamed all through them. His first session was in the Group Thrash when he supported the uke players with his tambourine.

His second spot was when he and his mother, Angela, danced and ratted dem bones to "Dem Bones, Dem Bones" and once again, he was a star.

In his third spot he dressed for the part as a Morris Dancer and danced to "The Floral Dance."



Dem Bones

We are all very pleased for you Ashley and feel sure that George and his Lamp Post are beaming down for you.

Funny Thing Happened

It was about 4 in the afternoon of Friday Nov 2nd and I received a phone call, "Hello Stan, Margaret here, - you know? Scottish Margaret." Well, it sounded just like Margaret Royle who helps to run the N. Wales meetings, - and I was just about to get ready to go to that meeting, - so I naturally assumed that it was the same Margaret. She said, "Now I know you are a vegetarian but do you eat salmon? - "No problem Margaret," I replied. "OK" said Margaret, and put the phone down.

I said to Eva, "I won't bother having any tea because there's something special on at Penyffordd and I'll be having Salmon sandwiches." OK—No Problem.

At the meeting I was feeling a bit peckish and looked forward to having a snack. After the interval no sandwiches had arrived so I said to Margaret, "What happened to the sandwiches?" - "What sandwiches?" said Margaret. She looked bewildered, "The salmon sandwiches you rang me up about this afternoon." - "I didn't ring you." - "You did" - "I didn't" - "Well, you are the only Scottish Margaret I know"

The following morning I told Eva the story of the mystery caller and the missing salmon sandwiches and she came up with the answer. The mystery caller was another Scottish Margaret who helps to run the Alliance Club in Warrington. They've invited us to go on a trip with them and there's a meal thrown in, - well not actually thrown in, you know what I mean. Thank goodness the problem's solved. Penyffordd Margaret thought I was going senile.

Just spent a couple of hours with John Hickenbottom, making backing tapes. There's no doubt about it but this lad, - an ex-professional player who has backed nearly all the well known artists, is certainly a great artist himself when he gets down to it. Wonderful player.

OUR STAN 'THE BANANAMAN' FRONTS CREWE SHOW.

The Crewe meeting opened with a message from Carl Basford, one of Crewe's regular MC's, who is for the moment ill in hospital in Stoke on Trent. Carl wanted everyone to know that he was disappointed that he could not take his place on stage that night and he wanted everyone to know how much he appreciated all the cards, visits and get well messages that he had been receiving. Everyone in the audience of 80 wished Carl a speedy recovery and signed a card for him indicating that we are all looking forward to seeing him soon. Stan Evans our popular Newsletter Editor and a man who knows more about bananas than King Kong agreed at short notice to stand in for Carl and he soon proved to be a popular temporary replacement as the audience soon took to him from his nipples to his Jim Greaves!



Hard working Brian
Supplies a lot of
Newsletter material

Alice Cronshaw took Cliff and Margaret Royle on a "*Slow Boat to China*" and they both responded by dancing out the number, which was being played when they first met over 50 years ago. Connie dressed in her Pearly Queen outfit entertained with "*Running Round the Fountains in Trafalgar Square*" and "*Living in the Middle of Trafalgar Square*" both which were well received by the audience.

It was great to have with us again that fine performer from Wrexham, Jim Knight who delighted us with a couple of "Formby" army songs- "*Get Cracking*" and "*A Long Time Gone*". Again Alison Nadin impressed our audience with her talent as a ventriloquist. I believe that working with two dummies is very difficult and can be likened to patting oneself on the head and rubbing ones tummy in a circular fashion at the same time. It takes an awful lot of skill. Add to that the creation of two different voices as well as ones own, remembering the script and what have you got - a great act. Knowing Alison's talents she could do all that and somehow play the uke at the same time. She's a great all round entertainer.

Nine-year-old Gregory Simister, complete with his cool haircut, gave us another impressive performance. This young lad has great talent. He is pleasantly confident, he understands the numbers he is singing and he takes full advantage of any double entendres. He has a pleasant smile and a nice singing voice. Add to that great enthusiasm to play his instrument well and we have a young star in the making.

For me the highlight of the evening was the wonderful performances of 22-year-old Ashley Caldicott. Ashley, seriously disabled from birth has, since joining our group, developed remarkably. He has lost his shyness and he will now shake hands as a form of greeting. He loves getting up in the thrash and tapping his tambourine and

his dressing up performances on stage are truly wonderful. These achievements to some may not seem a lot but believe me this young man with the loving care of his mother has climbed a mountain.

Cliff Royle really grafted for us all night as concert producer planning our show. This job is really demanding and Cliff was worth his weight in gold. Cliff will be back as MC in the spring. Stan Watkinson, minus his guitar banjo came on stage sporting a hybrid Dallas B banjolele and entertained us with a Stan Evans composition, "Longing For You" and followed by a Beatles number "When I'm Sixty-four". He later joined Stan Evans and Ashley Caldicott in a drum banging session of the "Floral Dance" Stan Watkinson and Ashley being dressed as Morris Dancers. A very colourful performance.

Gerald Beadle made his debut singing a poignant number without music entitled "Where have all the Flowers Gone." This was doubly apt as it will soon be Armistice Day and our hall is a War Memorial to 15 Wistaston men who died as a result of the 1939-1945 war. Gerald paid the society a compliment in his opening remarks when he said "This is the best show in town" and all the audience agreed.

We were pleased to welcome among others some new faces Mrs Peg Perry and her friend and Brian and Valerie Jones we hope that they enjoyed their evening and that we will see them again at future concerts.

The night was rounded off by Stan Evans who thanked everyone concerned for his or her efforts and followed it with a sing along. It was a great evenings entertainment due to the efforts of everyone who took the stage, along with the musical back up, percussion Steve Hassall and Sound Engineer Colin Wood.

Thanks Brian, and for the opportunity to MC the show for you. I enjoyed doing it and I've always enjoyed Music Hall settings.

It was worth being positioned at the front just to see the broad beaming smile across Ashley's face as he danced with his mum to "Dem Bones, Dem Bones." You have a wonderful appreciative audience at Crewe so it is little wonder that Ashley is progressing well and getting a kick out of performing. It is like a medicine to him.

Where else could older folk go, either to be entertained, or to get up on stage to do a spot. Matthew Kelly is well into his 80s but that doesn't stop him from getting up on stage to do a turn and then receive just as much applause as any other artist. Everybody joined in with his lovely melodies and it was easy to see he was getting a kick out of it. This is great for the older folk and something completely lacking on TV.

Don't Forget—Werrington's last meetings will be held on Thurs 15th Nov. and Thurs 20th Dec. before closing down. This will be your last opportunity to pay them a visit. Bill Turner is pleased with the attendance but he is finding it difficult to manhandle the equipment each month. Bill's phone number is on the back cover



Cliff Royle A Giant in News Reporting on THE N.WALES BRANCH NOVEMBER MEETING.

This was the best night ever with an attendance in the one hundred and twenty mark. The meeting was arranged as a tribute to all the hard work done by our talented Stan Evans who has done a wonderful job over many years to promote our hero George Formby and his music especially through his Warrington Exhibition of 1991 to which nearly forty thousand people attended. Following this exhibition a great deal of interest was aroused in the

North West, which resulted in a number of new clubs being formed many of which, such as ours, are very successful.

The occasion was organised by John Taylor of Morecambe for whom support had been given by Walter and Andy Eastwood, Anthony Mason, Dennis Lee, Gerry Mawdsley, and Charles and Eve Stewart. Most of these were at the meeting, and we are indebted to them for their support. Apologies were received from Gerry Mawdsley, and Dennis and Lesley Lee who sent a great tribute to Stan by e-mail. I am sure they would have appreciated the occasion. Apparently they are off to Cyprus for twelve months in the near future. Perhaps it should be explained that the reason it was held at Penyffordd was that this was the most suitable date for John to attend.

Although Eva knew what was going on Stan was kept completely in the dark until Stan Watkinson asked him to join him in song on the Stage. Then it all happened. Many George Formby friends, and members of his family joined him on the stage. John Taylor then gave a speech praising Stan for all the efforts he had put in over the years and then presented him with a framed drawing of the "Two Lancashire Lads" (Stan and George with his famous lamp post). Stan was speechless; what a change. Eva was then presented with a bouquet of flowers, and Brian Edge from the Crewe Branch also expressed his appreciation of the great amount of work put in by Stan both generally and in the Newsletter. There followed the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow". Contributions to the cost of the flowers and picture came from the membership of North West Branches who contributed in no small way to the success of the evening..

Space doesn't permit the detailing of all performances but I must mention the excellent playing by Anthony Mason and John Shreeve which literally brought the house down. They were just superb, not only in their own performances, but also in joining in the various Thrash sessions. Perhaps one highlight was when Anthony and Stan played their very own song "I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele just like George Formby used to do" which they wrote at the time of the Warrington Exhibition.

There were a wide variety of performances from lady singers to uke players, with excellent playing over all age groups between our youngest members Greg Simister and Stephen Ensall and our veteran player Jim Griffiths The Crewe and Sale members

gave their normal superb support, and John Taylor entertained us in his usual chirpy fashion. So thanks John for all your efforts. Hope your parents and family enjoyed the evening. Did your son enjoy joining in the Banana song? Many thanks also to our photographic friends who took photographs and videos, and to those who provided raffle prizes and supported us in any way.

One or two general items are worthy of noting. Geoff Shone's niece Stephanie celebrated her 12th. Birthday for the following week, and we were able to welcome about twenty people from the Glyn Home in Caergwrle (they had been invited by the British Legion). Regrettably it only came to light after the meeting that it had been John Taylor's Fathers 77th birthday that day, so perhaps he will accept our belated greetings. A cheque was presented to Arthur Arnold, the Secretary of the British Legion Club at Penyffordd towards the Poppy Appeal. This was to thank them in some small measure for the tremendous support they give to our Branch in so many ways.

And so the evening eventually came to a close about 11.30 pm and we were finally all on our way home by just after midnight. Our thanks to those members of the Branch who sacrificed their turn at playing, because of the lengthy programme. Yes it is all part of the comradeship of the GFS and may it stay that way.

A large number of bookings have already been made for the Christmas Party on Friday 7th. December. Bookings have to be made in advance as the Buffet has to be booked; so "Get Cracking". It is a 'ticket only' do.

Just had two short reports from Geoff Shone that he would like included in the next Newsletter if possible. They relate to our recent meeting; from which he did not get home until 1.30 am. The Secretary of the Penyffordd British Legion, Arthur Arnold, wishes us to accept the sincere thanks of his Committee for the £50 donation we made to the Poppy Appeal in acknowledgement of all the help and support they continually give to our Branch. The Matron of the Glynn Home in Caergwyle also rang to thank us and the British Legion for inviting them to our concert. The folks enjoyed a wonderful evening which has been the "Talk of the Home" ever since. *Many thanks young Cliff for your speedy Email. You are getting quite a dab hand on your computer.*

Carl Basford writes—Dear Stan, I'm sorry I missed the surprise night that was put on in your honour at Penyffordd. I believe that it was a really good night.



Please print in the Newsletter my sincere thanks to all our Formby friends for all the good wishes and cards that I have received in the past couple of weeks. I am getting stronger each day, so it should not be too long before I'm back with the most friendly and thoughtful people I know. Yours Sincerely, Carl. *Thanks Carl. We are all pleased that you are on the mend and look forward to seeing you back in the saddle again. Best Wishes To You.*

Professor Jeffrey Richards was interviewed for the

George Formby "South Bank Show." He said in his interview: George Formby's character was very strongly rooted in Lancashire and he never lost the accent, which remained very thick and strong. He celebrated Lancashire in his songs: The Lancashire Romeo, The Lancashire Toreador and the Emperor of Lancashire. The character he developed was the archetypal gormless Lancashire lad, which originated with his father George Formby senior, who was a much loved music hall star of the earlier part of the century. George senior had been illegitimately born in poverty, in 1875, in Ashton under Lyne and he earned his living as a singing beggar before we went on the stage. He developed this archetypal (an original model of which others are copies) Lancashire gormless lad called John Willie.



At 16 years of age George junior took over his father's act

He wore a very funny outfit of baggy trousers, tight jacket, bowler hat and big boots. He was a slow talking, slow thinking henpecked, beer loving figure who muddled it through in the end.

George senior was a very tragic figure. He had a long-standing chest complaint which turned into TB which he worked into his act with the phrase, "Coughing better tonight" which was a terribly sad comment on the industrial conditions in the north-west in that period. He died at the age of 44 in 1921, and his widow, George Junior's mother, immediately coached young George in all his father's routines, songs etc.

She put him into the costume and on the stage immediately. Listen to the records of father and son, and they sound exactly the same. George junior took up the John Willie character and eventually streamlined it. But he always remained the same gormless, Lancashire Lad. There are two areas which are interesting here, relating to Lancashire, I think. One is that the sociologist, Geoffrey Gore defined the social structure of Lancashire as being matriarchal, (bossy women) partly to do with work patterns. More women worked in Lancashire than say, in the north east which was a patriarchal (bossy men) society, and in Lancashire the women were very dominant. They developed an independent sturdy character which is very much embodied in Gracie Fields.

DOCTOR: I've got good news and some bad news. PATIENT: What's the bad news?
 DOCTOR: You've only got a week to live. PATIENT: And what's the good news?
 DOCTOR: I've just won the lottery.

YOUNG ARAB BOY: Dad, why do we wear white scarves around our heads?
 DAD: That is to keep the blazing hot sun off our heads son.
 BOY: Dad, why do we have such big feet?
 DAD: They are so big to prevent us sinking in the desert sands.
 BOY: But tell me dad. Why are we living in Moss Side?

Our Gracie's 80th Birthday Surprise Party

A lot of you will remember our Warrington Gracie Fields who entertained at our meetings singing Gracie's songs: Sally, Bless This House, The Biggest Aspidistra In The World, and All Tucked Up In Me Little Bottom Drawer etc. Well Ethel Guest, God Bless Her, was 80 years of age on the 9th November and all her many, many friends clubbed together to give her the surprise of her life. They made use of a church hall and conned her into being picked up by car and being led into a dark candle lit room. What a shock for her when the music started with a very rich presentation of "Happy Birthday To You" The strings of the violins filled the room and Ethel was shell-shocked.



"Ee Bah Gum" she said, in Gracie fashion, "Aarve never known owt like it." as she was surrounded by about 70 friends.

Some years back Ethel was one of our concert troupe travelling round so they asked if I would supply the music for the night. "No problem—I've got all her backing tapes" I told them, but it meant missing out on the Liverpool 10th Anniversary Special, which was on the same night. Stan Watkinson and Jim Bramwell went to hold the fort at Liverpool and I put on a two man (Ethel & I) at Warrington.

You can't beat the women for putting a good buffet spread and on this occasion they excelled themselves. There was enough food to feed the army and it was all so well set out.

A COMEDY OF DISASTERS!!! - For the occasion I invested £99 in a good quality mike and all three mikes worked perfectly during my short warm-up spot. But as soon as Ethel took the stage all three mikes packed up. It was unbelievable. How could three mikes die in one night? The repartee between us was like a well rehearsed script and the whole room thought it was part of the act. Roars of laughter followed and when I tried to assure them that it was a genuine disaster they didn't believe me.

"Ee" said Ethel, "What a shock I got when I saw her carrying the baby upside down" and was just about to launch into her Gracie song when the mikes went dead. Every time Ethel got to the second verse the mikes would cut out on her and she would blame me for standing on the wire. "You are sabotaging my act so that I don't outshine you" said Ethel. "It's you" I replied, you are shouting at the mikes and giving em an inferiority complex." The banter went on for half an hour or so and the crowd thought it was one of our old sketches. They all went home laughing and a very good night was had by all. Ethel has lost about 80% of her sight but she's got all her chairs at home. And she's still got a lovely strong voice.

What A Great Night!!! - Well I was well and truly conned

at Penyffordd when John Taylor and his merry band of pirates deviously led me to the slaughter. Once again I was completely gob-smacked. It was at Penyffordd three



years ago that I was bowled over with a surprise 70th birthday party and I vowed then that I'd never be caught out again. Well I was—hook, line and sinker!!!

Left: Eva, Eve Stewart, Yours truly, Brian Edge, Stuart (son) Stephanie, Cyril Palmer. Eva was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers for supporting the effort.

What a shock, especially when my family, Eva, Stuart (Son) - Jenny (Daughter in law) and Jennifer, (Granddaughter) came walking down the aisle. "What on earth have this lot turned up for" I asked myself. They are not into George Formby! Suddenly the whole plot became unveiled. So this was the reason why we've had numerous phone calls from John Taylor asking for phone numbers. He must have been ringing half the GFS.

But there were a few clues along the line that I should have picked up on:-

1. Why did John Taylor keep ringing up for phone numbers? He was very keen to contact John Shreeve for uke lessons, - surely he doesn't need uke lessons.
2. At the meeting why did several members ask me to get up on stage to do presentations? Surely they would ask the committee to arrange it.
3. Why did Jim & Joan Bramwell buy me a bottle of whisky, - for what occasion?
4. Why did Charles and Eve Stewart turn up at the meeting? They've not been for three years, - why tonight?
5. Why have Christine and Janet arrived from Milton Keynes, when they intend coming again at the end of November to do their Christmas shopping?
6. Why did Anthony Mason & John Shreeve turn up out of the blue?
7. Why did Stan Watkinson keep telling me to get there early to grab seats.
8. When we arrived why did Stan, Christine and Janet insist on sitting at the front?
9. Why was the hall getting packed out so early in the night?
10. Why did Stan Watkinson go up on stage in the first half (usually the second half) and ask me to accompany him with one of his songs.
11. Why are so many ringing me to ask me to bring some strings and things to the meeting? I'll tell you why! I was like a lamb (and a thick one at that) led to

slaughter and everybody in the room knew about it BUT ME!!!! I was well and truly GOBSMACKED!!!! And it was only when I saw my family walking down the aisle that it dawned on me. WHAT ON EARTH!!!!

Apparently all the world knew about it, from as far as Essex, Kent, Westhoughton, Liverpool, Morecambe, Sale, Blackpool, Crewe and Timbuktu.



Presented to STAN EVANS by the North-West NEWSLETTER readers. A token of our appreciation from the N.West Formby fans

The beautiful framed award (left) which was too large to fit in the scanner, was created by Joe McCaffrey (Liverpool) the caption reads "TWO LANCA-SHIRE LADS."



A REAL TREAT!!! - And really appreciated!! - But Happy Birthday Stephanie what a treat also to see Anthony Mason and John Shreeve up on stage playing "The William Tell Overture" on their ukes. Considering they've not practised together for a couple of



years it came over very well.

My thanks to all who took part in "The Sting" - though how on earth my family managed to keep it a secret for so long has me beat. My thanks also to Harry Jones who blocked my letter box up with a huge parcel of photos. It must have cost you a fortune Harry.

A lamb to the slaughter, and here is the man who tricked me—in a very nice way, that is. John Taylor.

PROMISE—You will never, never, never catch me out again!!!

Bob Drinkwater rang—Stan, that photo on the front of the October Newsletter definitely wasn't our George. You've slipped up with that one OK. I have been a Formby fan most of my life and I can recognise George anytime.

Well, I know you are a master in the art of GF but you've got this one wrong Bob. Beryl, buy him some new glasses.



Geoff Shone rang—Stan, I didn't know

that the undertaker who arranged George's funeral wrote some of his songs. Ken Bruce mentioned it on his BBC2 radio programme today. Has he got it wrong? *No Geoff, Ken has got it right. Bruce Williams had an undertaking business in Liverpool and he also composed music under the name of Eddie Latta. Eddie wrote the following songs for George: "Andy The Handy Man," - "Mr Wu's An Air Raid Warden Now," - "Got To Get Your Photo In The Press"* He also wrote the following which he shared credits with George: *"Granddad's Flannelette Nightshirt," - "Guarding The Home Of The Home Guards," - "Spotting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower," - "Auntie Maggie's Remedy," - "Get Cracking," - "Mr Wu's In The Air Force."* Thanks for ringing in Geoff.



Eddie Latta

Cilla Dot Com is back again—Another Email for you Stan.

Further to your article on George's home, Heronby, I am trying to trace other houses where George and Beryl lived. Do you have any addresses. *Hello Cilla Dot Com. Nice to hear from you again. Nobody has come back to me re. your query on Penyffordd but they've been very busy lately creating more surprises.*

About six years ago there was an article in the GFS Vellum by Alan Southworth on the houses where G & B lived, so here goes.

George & Beryl were married while he was living at Hill Crest, London Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington.

HOUSE ONE:- 836 Lancaster Rd, Barton, Nr Preston.

TWO:- "Beryldene" Mains Lane, Singleton, Nr Blackpool.

THREE:- Was a farm, Sullom End, Barnacre Nr Garstang

FOUR:- The Spinney, Mere Corner, Mere, Nr Knutsford.

FIVE:- "Aldon" Knocksinna, Foxrock, Southern Ireland.

SIX:- Beryldene, Fairhaven, Blackpool.

SEVEN:- Beryldene, 199 Inner Promenade, Lytham St Anne's

G & B also owned "Heronby" on the Norfolk Broads.

I understand that the very first house where G & B lived was in George Street, Wigan but this was only temporary. So there you have it Cilla. Thanks for Emailing in.



Stan Watkinson, Jim & I

were doing a show for the over 60s in Widnes and the lady secretary asked our name to announce. "We haven't got one" I told her. When we arrived home I asked Eva to think of a name for us and immediately she came up with, "The Past Its." - The cheeky monkey. But then I thought, 'What a good name because it could be "The Passed Hits.'" meaning that we sing all the old passed hits. So in future we are known as "The Passed Hits."

Tips on Compering a Show— It can be very embarrassing at times, tackling the M/Cs job, and especially if things aren't going right on the night. There's nothing worse than when the next artist is not ready to get on stage and you are stood there nervously, looking a right berk with nothing to say. Now the worst thing to do is to leave the stage vacant because that is one way of killing the show. Yes!! like every boy scout, you must be prepared.

So what you need is a load of very short anecdotes to fill in the gaps. Or little one liners like we've published in the Newsletter over the past months. These are ideal for filling the vacant spot.

Here's a few examples:- *"While we are waiting for the next artist I will give a rendition of that good old favourite, 'Don't hit your mother with a shovel, It'll leave a dull impression on her mind. It's in four flats, and a slow puncture."*

Or:- Here's a few more: *"Don't go down the coal mine daddy, there's plenty of slack in your pants."* Or, *"You'll be dancing in my heart tonight so please take off your clogs."* - *"Meet me under the clothes line cos that's where I'll be hanging out."* And there's loads more.

If ever you feel nervous on stage, - singing or M/Cing - have a good look through the audience and pick out those with smiling faces, and sing to them. Young Walter Kirkland is ideal. He's always got a smile. Avoid like the plague those with stern and grim faces. They are the kiss of death to any nervous entertainer. However, the Formby followers are a good crowd to entertain in general.

If the crowd is noisy, DON'T Introduce the next artist until all is quiet. And always insist on quietness and appreciation. The artist deserves it! HAPPY DAYS

Npower—If you get a knock on the door it could be someone canvassing to get you to change your energy supplier to Npower. If so, beware.

Eva & I changed over when they offered cheaper Gas & Electric, plus a 7% discount if we set up direct debit mandates. No problem. But then they lost the mandates and had to send a rep round for another signing, - which they lost again. The first bill came and there was no discount. I challenged them and their reason was because we hadn't signed a mandate. A third mandate was signed. This was followed by a series of blunders one of them being: two estimated bills for electric within five days with a £15 standing charge on each bill, - but no gas bill. All my many letters of complaint were completely ignored, but we received a demand - "Pay up or we'll chop you off threat!! We received a phone call asking for payment. I asked how we could pay the bill if we haven't had a meter reading or a bill to pay. "OK" they said, "we'll send you a bill" - which didn't arrive. Back to British Gas.

Sale—Oh, Not Again! - The Sale October Meeting took place in the Timperley Taverners Club. But No! we have NOT moved again. The club has simply had a change of name, after the new management dropped the political connection. Until now it was the Timperley Liberal Club.



There was a good turnout for the evening with a talented army of entertainers, supported, as often, by members from Wistaston. Jean & Alison Nadin arrived with Frankie Woods from Rhyl.

Between them all they sang 33 songs and medleys and of those 16 were George Formby songs. The result was a nice varied entertainment. The Formby songs we don't hear too often included "The Emperor Of Lancashire" (Jon Baddeley) - "My Plus Fours" (Alan Southworth) - "The Best Of Schemes" (Brian Edge) - "Running Round The Fountains" (Connie Edge) and "I Promised To Be Home By Nine o'clock" (Alan Chenery).

Among the other songs Alice Cronshaw went "Off To China", slowly, Margaret Moran "Only Had Eyes For Me", Des Redfern sang country, Pam Baddeley took us back to the 50s and 60s, "Tom Dooley" hung his head with Arthur Newton, the Stans, Evans & Watkinson, combined for "If I Had My Life To Live Over" and Walter Kirkland rattled his bones to his Tulip medley.

There was a break in the singing supplied by Daisy, a colourful (puppet) bird with the gift of the gab, who was ably assisted by Alison Nadin (ventriloquist). Add to the above the Thrash, some pleasant background music before the start, and the interval refreshments and we had the good recipe for another good evening together.

Recently I was introduced as the person who ran the Sale club. So may I point out that mine is one of the two contact names, but at least 12 of our members are involved in the setting up and running our meetings. I would like to thank them sincerely for their continued support.

DATE CHANGE (one only) - Our meetings are held on the third Friday each month, but PLEASE NOTE that our DECEMBER MEETING will be on the SECOND FRIDAY, the 14th of DECEMBER.

Thanks Cyril, unfortunately Stan Watkinson & I will be at Liverpool on the 2nd Friday so we will miss your Christmas meeting. I like the new venue, not too small and not too large. Just Right!

Paddy gave up his attempt to climb Mount Everest when he ran out of scaffolding.

There once was a farm girl named Mabel, who at milking was not very able. To get over her plight, she practised at night, with sausages under the table.

Phone Call from Ray Bernard. Ray is to appear in a Grand Variety Show at the Daneside Theatre, Congleton(nr Crewe) which is and eight performance show from the 25th of November.

This has been quite a popular, sell out, show over the past 25 years and is in aid of the Cheshire Scouts. Well known producer, Fred Walker, is producing the show and no less than 50 dancers and singers will be taking part.

Ray will be doing a tribute to George similar to the BBC TV Friday Show ending when George sang Lamp Post, Windows and—as George said, - “This little fellow will never die, Mr Wu.”

Young Gareth Sumner was given the opportunity to perform on the bill but he is now working as an apprentice mechanic, so work is preventing him from performing on lengthy shows. *Thanks for the article Ray. Hope it goes well.*

Barry Secrette left me a piece of sheet music

which must have been written around the 1930s/40s when ukuleles were very popular It is called “On My Ukulele” and it has, - wait for it—44 funny verses. Here’s some of them . . . Plus another 38 verses to follow, which beats Harry Stanford’s (God Bless Him and Lottie) record. He would stand up at the meetings and sing up to 35 verses of Little Brown Jug. If anyone wants a copy of the song (with music) I’ll be pleased to send you one.



How they get condensed milk
I could never understand
I can't imagine how they make
The cow sit on the can

Jonesy whispered to his wife
“Why don't you bill and coo”
She said “I'll do the cooing dear!
And leave the bills to you.”

If you catch your husband flirting
Shouted Mrs Rice
Throw him overboard three times
And only save him twice

Pat went to a funeral, and
When I asked who died
He said, “I don't know, I only
Came out for the ride

Tell me what a backbone is
Teacher asked my brother
He said: “Your head sits on one end
And you sit on the other”

Mashed potatoes with my peas
I've eaten all my life
The mashed potatoes stop the peas
From rolling off my knife.

Old Harry was a great character that is surely missed. At every meeting he was sure to get heckled but he loved every minute. Members constantly ask what happened to Harry's ukes and banjo, but the answer is that I don't know.

What A Funny Lot by Cyril Palmer—Les Peason has been



Les Pearson—Fund Raiser

busy. Well for a minute, anyway. He was delighted to be invited to take part in a record breaking event, "The Comedy 100."

This was organised by Tony Boloney and Des Sharples at the Dancehouse Theatre in Manchester as a fund-raiser for the Christie Hospital.

The idea was to set a world record by getting at least 100 comedians to perform for one minute each. On the night Les was one of the 112 performers. He squeezed 12 jokes into his minute and was warmly received. He mentioned that he was born quite close to the Dancehouse, his father being an electrician, and Les his first shock. In addition to setting the record the event raised £1000 for Christies.

Les works hard to raise funds for Broughton House, a home for ex-service men and women. In December he will entertain the Monte-Casino Veterans Association in exchange for a donation to the Broughton House funds. *Many thanks for the article Cyril.*

George On CD—Just been watching Sky TV and one of the many

adverts was offering a good bargain. It is a set of eight CDs called, "The Golden Years" - 200 of the old songs by the original artists. They are mainly American singers from the war years to the mid 50s but there are a number of British stars there like Grace Fields and George Formby. In fact one of the CDs has a large photo of George on the front of the case. K Tel Records have produced the set and it is being offered at a bargain price of £19.99 + £3.95 pp. The phone No. is 08 700 400 800 and the catalogue number is KTR 006. At 10p a song it is worth buying.

Latest Financial News: - Helium is up, - Feathers are

down, - Paper was stationary, - Fluorescent lights are down in light trading, - Knives were up sharply, - Pencils were down a few points, - Elevators were up and down, - Escalators experienced a slight decline, - Mining equipment hit rock bottom, - Sun peaked at mid-day, - Raisins dried up, - Artists models were still, - Vacuum cleaners picked up, - Caravans were trailing, - Socks were unchanged, - Balloons remain inflated, - and the bottom fell out of disposable nappies.

Geoff Shone claims that there is only one thing worse than being fooled by a kiss, and that is being kissed by a fool.

THANKS GEOFF. MORE ONE LINERS ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED

I Remember George by Jim Griffiths.

George was my idol, a real Lancashire lad
With saucy songs and his ukulele, he'd always make us laugh
I learnt a lot by watching George, at films and shows he was in
I'm very pleased to sing and play, a little bit like him



George won great honours in countries he'd been
And was even a favourite with our Royal King and Queen
So when God called him to his Kingdom, and by his rightful name
I know the words that George would say: It's Turned Out Nice Again

For he topped the bill wherever he went, as well ahead he'd forge
So I'll say "GOD BLESS" - you know all the rest
THAT'S HOW I REMEMBER GEORGE.

AND ANOTHER FROM JIM.

I Have a ukulele that goes about with me
Bringing happiness and laughter wherever we might be
We play for young folk, we play for old. We never make a fuss
We play for other people too, who are not as fortunate as us

Sometimes when I go to my home and mother's feeling blue
I strike a few chords on my uke, and sing "Oh Mr Wu"
And when we come up on the stage to do our little spot
We like to hear your loud applause, for it's hard work at the top

Throughout the years we've made you smile
Forget your troubles for a while
For if laughter's a tonic as well it might be
Then I know you've had that from my ukulele and me.

Thanks Jim. Nice to see you up on stage at Penyffordd. Keep plonking.

Odd Sayings by Brian Edge—There it was, gone. - Boil the kettle. - Found to be missing. - Bend it straight. - Best part of a tidy bit. - She won't come now, sure to. - *Thanks Brian. One that I like is an Irish saying: "Hello Murphy, is it yerself?"*

There must be millions more odd sayings out there so how's about sending them in.

There is one thing more exasperating than a wife who can cook and won't, and that is a wife who can't cook and will..

HAVE YOU ANY JOKES—ONE LINERS FOR THE NEWSLETTER?



Alan Chenery has just phoned — He was watching the “Frank Skinner Show” on TV on Saturday night 28th October as he was interviewing Tracy Shaw he picked up a uke and sang “Why Don’t Women Like Me”.

Thanks for the info Alan.

A FEW BITS FOR YOU STAN from Brian Edge.

So I started playing the piano and this elephant burst into tears, I said, “do you recognise the tune?” he said, “no but I recognise the ivory”.

This chap was chatting up a cheetah; I thought, “he’s trying to pull a fast one”.

So I said to the Gym instructor “can you teach me to do the splits?” He said, “How flexible are you?” I said, “I can’t make Tuesdays”.

Now you know those trick candles that you blow out and a couple of seconds later they come alight again, well the other day there was a fire at the factory that makes them.

The other day I sent my Girlfriend a huge pile of snow. I rang her up and said, “Do you get my drift?”

So I rang up British Telecom, I said, “I want to report a nuisance caller,” He said “not you again!” Amen.

Martin Thomas Emails—Dear Stan, I received a phone call from Terry a mate of mine down in Essex telling me that George Formby would be on Radio 2 Sunday the 21st October on the Ed Stewart programme. I tuned in waiting for a quick two minutes, which is normal for the BBC, but low and behold there was plenty of George records and memories, throughout the whole programme, with lots of members emailing their comments and knowledge to Ed Stewart. Don't think you will listen next week however, its Rod Stewart. What a contrast! Never mind, a nice change to hear George on the radio .

Last Monday I switched on the local radio Shropshire and John croft was on talking about a uke that had been brought in to a music shop in Shrewsbury, with Georges autograph on the vellum. But John said he thought it was a John E Dallas and Sons instrument, with a ink stencil on the skin of Georges autograph. It is said the uke was in excellent condition, with the case, and John put a figure of about £125 on it. *Many thanks Martin. No I'm afraid I won't be tuning in to Ed Stewart. I understand he had to retire from singing when he got his voice back. Keep sending those Emails in.*

Phone Call—“Hello Stan, Ben Hallewell here. I’ve been invited to do a recording for BBC Radio on November 1st at the Charter Theatre, Preston. It is for ‘Children In Need’ and the show will be broadcast on radio on November 16th.”

Great News Ben. We are very pleased for you and hope you do a grand job on the day. It’s wonderful to hear that the youngsters are still pushing George.



A GF Senior/Junior LP record

for sale “A Chip Off The Old Block” featuring George Formby Senior with eight of his numbers on one side and George Formby on the other side singing eight his fathers numbers. Ref. Living Era AJA 5003. The record is in mint condition and the asking price is £10. Ring Derek on 01782 279841.

If anyone is interested this LP is well worth buying. They are out of print now so are difficult to obtain. I don’t think that Living Era produced many of these as they wee out of stock soon after they were launched on the market. Some day they could be collectors items.

Poor Des—Des Redfern strode into the Blackpool Cricket Club meeting with a look of self assurance and a mini disc crammed with backing songs. When it was his turn to get up on stage he passed his disc over to Charles, “Here you are Charles, give us numbers 7 and 12.” He bounced up on to the stage—told a couple of jokes, - “Right Charles, press the button.” Nothing! Not a murmur from the disc player. He told another joke, still oozing with confidence, “Right Charles, press the button.” - Nothing. “There’s no songs on this disc,” said Charles. “Of course there is” said Des. By now the lad was looking serious as he managed to utter the words, “Are you joking? - Well it was full when I left home.”



Then came long debates on what has happened to poor Des’s backing songs. 25 songs have disappeared from his disc and nobody knew where they were. After an announcement everybody looked under the seats but his songs weren’t there. We could only assume he’d lost them on the M6.

Anyway, like the professional he is, he performed well on the night and without the aid of backing. Good for you Des. We hope your songs turn up.

Alan Chenery has just phoned—He is watching The Generation Game on TV and who should be singing in the background but our George with Windows.

N. West Meetings

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every first Friday in the month. Tel Geoff Shone on 01244 544605 Adm 50p. Where can you get a better bargain than that?

Liverpool - Broadgreen Conservaive Club, Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 289 1711 - Bring Your Uke

Werrington Branch (Near Stoke) at the Werrington Village Hall - LAST TWO MEETINGS BEFORE FINISHING (See Page 5 for details) THURS NOV 15th and THURS DEC 20th. Bill Turner on 01782 304858.

Sale - NEW VENUE - AGAIN—Timperley Liberal Club, 43 Park Road, Timperley. Every 3rd Friday in the month - Ring Cyril Palmer 0161 748 6550 Adm £1.

Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

Westhoughton - The Red Lion Pub (Opp. Police Station) Ring Gerry Mawdsley on 01942 817346 - Every last Wednesday in the month. Uke Tuition.

Blackpool. SOUTH SHORE CRICKET GROUND, Common Edge Rd, Blackpool. Every last Monday (see page 19 for December only date change) in the month -Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097.

W o n d e r f u l B u f f e t .

Wintergardens GFS Meetings:

Sat & Sun 24th & 25th Nov 2001

No dates yet for year 2002

N. West—Two Lancashire Lads

Web Site: www.thehollies.u-net.com/formby.

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DON'T FORGET YOUR ARTICLE—OR ELSE

